



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL STAGE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

ALBION W. SMALL
The University of Chicago

For more years than we like to acknowledge, some of us have been saying that sociology is the fundamental human science. Others of us have preferred to say that sociology is the inclusive human science. Outside the ranks of sociologists there has been little evidence either of understanding these formulas or of will to understand them. Probably we have not always accurately interpreted one another's versions of these propositions, and possibly if we could begin over again from our present point of view we might find ways of expressing what we were groping after in an idiom that would grate less harshly on the ears of the unconvinced.

At all events I do not intend to unlimber those instruments of a warfare which now seems almost as ancient as it was honorable. I shall begin with the irenic assertion that whatever else may have been true or false about sociology, it was *inevitable*. Many acorns must feed swine and many more must rot on the ground, but those that strike root and survive are bound to become oaks. So thinking about human affairs has had to share the lot of all things mundane by yielding its wasteful toll of abortions and futilities. Given anywhere however the conditions for persistence, given freedom to evolve what is involved, given time to survey its previous course and to prospect the unexplored regions within its horizon, and thinking about human experience is as certain, in the fulness of time, to acquire the reach of sociology as the child to attain the stature of a man.

Whether or not we believe human reason capable of penetrating the sub- or the super-finite, all liberated minds are agreed that there is no stopping-place for our intelligence until we have applied our understanding with all its resources to everything that falls within the sweep of our conscious experience. Higher

ranges of mathematical problems will be undertaken as long as conceivable variations of quantitative relations remain unexplained. We shall enlarge the borders and rearrange the contents of our cosmologies as often as our processes of cosmic or atomic discovery bring new areas of greatness or littleness or complexness within our range of vision. Whether we shall arrive close to the goal or stop far from it, the mystery of life in the biological sense will be traced into every hiding-place which chemistry or physics in the service of physiology can penetrate; and whether we ever discover the origin of life or not, we shall never give up search for the connections between all the details which we can learn of its processes.

While these are truisms in connection with the physical world, we have not yet very generally recognized the equal certainty that the human mind will set no arbitrary limits to its inquiries in social connections. My assertion that sociology *had to be* is by no means a confession of ignorance that people are still declaring it can never be. Indeed my judgment is, that we have not yet passed the point at which denial of the right of suffrage to sociology grows obstinate in direct ratio with the increasing force of our argument. In fact the sociological yeast is an active ferment in all modern thinking about human affairs. Whether in religion or politics, in ethnology or economics, the men who are not merely threshing the empty straw of ancient categories, the men who are producing live thought-stuff, are doing it with the assistance of concepts and of processes that are essentially sociological. Among the theorists, however, generalizations of sociological concepts and processes, and claims that they are at least as valid as those of historiography or statistics, still affect the larger part of the scientific world as symptoms of mental aberration.

Twenty years ago this latter phase of the situation puzzled me. I had worked my way through the methodologies of the conventional social sciences, I had studied their briefs, so to speak, I had plotted the scope of their reasoning, but the more I thought over their programmes the more I was convinced that they had not exhausted the technique within our reach for inter-

preting social relations. It was incredible to me then that anyone could have considered the same evidence without arriving at my conclusion. Today it would tempt me to revive the miracle hypothesis if I found many people so soon accepting a point of view which throws everything that men of my age were taught in the schools into a changed perspective. The mind of the race does not work that way. On the contrary it is a leisurely circumlocution office. Even in our rapid day its pace is not so much accelerated that it is easy for us to be sure that it moves at all in our direction. It has boundless capacity for receiving reports of commissions, and for pigeon-holing them as securely as mummies entombed in the pyramids.

But we do change our mind. The reality in the world's experience forces us constantly to revise our preconceptions. For the encouragement of younger men, I am glad to say that the sociologists of my generation can hardly credit their memories when they contrast the present influence of sociology with the apparent hopelessness two or three decades ago. Our social sciences as a whole are in a stage parallel with that of the natural sciences when they were still marking time in the footprints of Linnaeus and Cuvier while beginning to talk the language of Darwin. The whole world is using terms of the process conception of life, while only here and there one has begun to suspect what the phraseology means for the social sciences. Whether sociology has had much or little to do with this change of the world's vocabulary, the concepts which compel the use of these pregnant signs had long before begotten sociology. Under some name or other it was bound to establish itself, unless men stopped tracing the connections of things in human experience. The texture of life foreordains the sociological phase of social science as unalterably as quantity relations foreordained algebra in the evolution of mathematics.

It has occurred to me therefore that the inevitableness of sociology might be made clearer even to ourselves, and still more to others into whose hands our proceedings might fall, if I should dispense with technicalities as far as possible, and call attention to a few things which no investigator of human relations can

seriously dispute. Instead then of presenting unfamiliar material, this paper depends wholly on the cumulative conclusiveness of the commonplace.

I will not apologize for deliberately making a paper out of platitudes. In my judgment new results are of much less strategic value for the sociologists at this moment than perfectly definite views of what we are doing and why we are doing it, and a consensus about the general ground on which we are making our fight for a hearing throughout the social sciences. Those of us who have come out alive from a long struggle to understand one another are not going to be satisfied until what we have in common is understood by the other social scientists. My own conviction is that, just as we sociologists have become more unified by subordinating our differences and making room for our individual lines of research within a general scheme of agreement, so we shall get on fastest in cross-fertilizing the whole social science brood if we adopt the policy of emphasizing certain things which everybody knows, and if we insist that these undebatable premises must be respected for all they are worth in developing all the social sciences. I am therefore calling up certain things which must be regarded as almost axiomatic by everyone who shares today's intellectual inheritance. I am pointing out that these things all converge toward a certain outlook. I am arguing that whatever be the specific differences among the sociologists, the one thing for which they stand is that human experience should be surveyed from this outlook before final judgment upon it is passed. Thus I am not attempting to make a contribution to sociology, but I am merely presenting my views about its genetic meaning in the evolution of the social sciences.

My first commonplace is that *all scientific interpretation today is in terms of function*. We find at one end of the social process the farmer performing the function of generating motor power by supplying food and fuel, and at the other end King Edward performing the function of a social shock-absorber. Every intermediate activity and actor in the human process sooner or later gets a functional rating which is more definitive than morphological classification in all current thinking.

I should be glad to give credit for this to whom it is due, if there were any way to award the merit. It is at all events a product of sophisticated naturalism dislodging bewildered mysticism. The ungraded school of life has itself predisposed everybody to the functional interpretation. Darwinism was one of its graded lessons, psychology is another, sociology is another. However we may scale causal efficiency among these concurrent factors, the base line of all positive reckoning today is the conviction, more or less consciously formulated, that everything is, and everything is worth, what it works.

My second commonplace is that *among the things to be interpreted by the function which they perform are the social sciences*. Everybody assumes that the social sciences discharge a function of some sort, or they would be intolerable.

Thereupon a third commonplace becomes pertinent, namely, that *the same agency often performs several functions, and as a particular case in point the social sciences are charged with both pedagogical and investigative functions*.

In this connection I find one of the chief obstacles to a complete audit of the account of the social sciences. Speaking generally, social scientists of all sorts are, first and foremost, teachers. Whether their chief interest ends with teaching or not, as a rule their activities move within a radius which the teacher's vocation prescribes. The content of the several social sciences tends accordingly to take a form which is convenient for the classroom. More than that, it tends to take a form which runs conventional lines between material convenient for one classroom and material convenient for other classrooms. Still further, the men in the several classrooms naturally grow sensitive about the prestige of the functions of their own classroom, and by just so much they become disqualified for objective estimates of the relative importance of their own classroom function and that of social science as a whole. In particular they lose ability to entertain the idea that the ratio of value which their respective functions may have in the pedagogical process may not be identical with the ratio of their value in the investigative process.

In this paper I am neither challenging the pedagogical prestige

of the other social sciences, nor am I pleading for a larger place for sociology in our curricula. Neither for the purposes of this paper nor for any other purpose would I question the right of any social science to all the chance it has gained in our academic programmes. Nor am I prepared to contend that our academic division of labor and distribution of the material of instruction in the social sciences do not correspond, as well as our present pedagogical knowledge would enable us to make them correspond, with the gradations of pupils' qualifications for the successive stages of analysis and generalization involved in progressive interpretation of human experience. Whether this latter is the case or not is a capital question for scientific pedagogy, but it would be foolish to make it turn upon any present issue between sociology and other sciences. The argument of this paper calls for complete abstraction from our pedagogical interests, and for entirely objective consideration of the interests of research. It is of course true that purely scientific results are bound to react upon pedagogical programmes. It is, however, an incidental platitude thrown in for good measure among the platitudes in the more direct course of my argument, that no man is loyal to his function as a scholar who allows mental reservations about possible effects upon his pedagogical interests to hamper investigation.

My fourth commonplace then is, that *the function of the social sciences as a whole is primarily to make out the meaning of human experience*. Whatever by-products the social sciences may throw off, they are bound first of all to be the interpreters of the human world to the human world. Their lesser services may aggregate no matter how great value, if they are not steadily enlarging the boundaries and deepening the foundations and enriching the contents of men's knowledge of themselves they are missing their chief calling. The question, "What does it all mean?" is not less the order of the day than when the first myth-makers gave the first answers. We have read most of the myth out of some of our world, and some of the myth out of most of our world, but all of us live in mythland still. It is merely a matter of where, and of what sort, and of how much. The

universal myth, which captures all of us at certain times and places, is that there is something about which we know everything. This is the darling myth of the specialist, whether in theory or in practice. The only blasphemy which the specialist is sure to resent is intimation that the thing which he thinks he knows is merely a nodule of minor relations until it is connected up with the whole cosmos of major relations. We make a myth of our specialty by the fiction that it is known when it is formulated by itself. We make a myth of all other experience by assuming that further formulation of it could have only a negligible value for our specialty. The foremost function of the social sciences is to forge ahead in resolving the mythical in the human lot into the actual by making out the working connections between all the phases of experience.

My fifth commonplace is that *stupid wastefulness prevails in the place of economy of the resources of social scientists for progressing with their function of social interpretation*. If one of our great industrial organizers were to take charge of social investigation in the United States, for example; if such a view of the function of the social sciences as I have indicated were clearly before his mind—if he obtained a thorough report of what is actually going on in the way of performing this function; his first reaction would be amazement that such a situation could have existed so long without breakdown or exposure. He would conclude without hesitation that its confusion, its purposelessness, its unorganization, its squandering energies needed for co-operation upon unsystematically selected details, would bankrupt any business whose resources were not unlimited.

He would be right. I can find no better analogy for the actual situation in our social sciences than the alleged condition which Secretary Meyer has undertaken to reform in our navy. As I have no authentic information about the facts, the illustration must be strictly hypothetical. A navy is presumably an effective combination of managerial and mechanical forces for sea fighting. Assuming the truth of all the accusations, we have no navy. We have some ships, we have some men aboard, we have an indefinite number of more or less independent adminis-

trative bodies working at cross purposes. In a crisis therefore it might turn out that one body had located ships where they were not needed, or where there were neither provisions nor ammunition; another body had stored supplies where there were no ships; another had failed to provide officers or crews sufficient to man the ships; and still another had built the ships in such a way that they were no match for the ships of the enemy. In order to have a navy we need a central correlating body that would have no partiality for any particular wheel within the wheels of the sea-fighting machine, but would rate each factor of administration and equipment at its proportional value for the total function of naval effectiveness. If everything that has been said about the contrast between what we have and what we need for a navy were true, our navy would still not be in so bad a way as our social sciences considered as a machinery for investigating human experience.

The programmes which we call social "sciences" are merely a chaos of elective curiosities. Consequently, instead of an organized function of social interpretation, we have a discordant medley of emphases and techniques. They pay as little attention to one another as they please, and their total output is accordingly a bewildering concourse of heterogeneities. Their effect is not to interpret human experience, but to make it a thousand fold more unintelligible than if this orgy of incontinent specialization had never silenced common-sense. Whatever our definitions, anthropology, ethnology, history, economics, political science, jurisprudence, psychology, and now sociology—each as it works out—is not only an emphasis, but it threatens to be an uncontrolled decomposition of emphases. Nearly every individual who bears the generic title which goes with one of these chief emphases invents his own private emphasis, as distinctive as his countenance or his bookplate, and makes his investigation regardless of whether it has any special relevancy to the investigation of anybody else.

The alleged "science" of a given time and place may be a mere fashion in emphases. One does not need to take very long or wide views in the history of science to discover that these

theoretical fashions are nearly as capricious, if not quite as obvious, as those in millinery. Nor may we flatter ourselves that we have passed into a period in which fashions in scientific emphasis are set entirely by rational norms. To a certain extent they are of course. The actual scope for the irrational, the unenlightened, the self-seeking in determining the fashions of emphasis in the social sciences is still tremendous.

My sixth commonplace is that, *of all the things upon which these fortuitous emphases are placed, some must have more value than others for purposes of coherent interpretation.* For instance, the attempt, in which so much of our best intellectual ability is now enlisted, to work out a calculus of our present system of economic distribution no doubt has a value. Inasmuch, however, as the proportions in our present distributive system might be disarranged by any one of countless laws which are conceivable, and some of them more or less probable, I submit that it would be somewhat more valuable to find out whether our present distributive system is worth retaining at all. We should say that a mathematical theory of the relative efficiency of pitchers and base-runners would be absurd, because changing a few words in the playing rules might invert the present ratio between pitchers' and base-runners' chances. Is it less absurd to assume that controllable conventionality cuts no figure in the larger game? What we really need to know is how artificial the rules actually are, in whose interest the artificiality has been smuggled in, and how the rules might be changed in the interest of a better balance of the human functions.

Or if the suggestion seems too speculative even for illustrative purposes, a real case which has fallen under my own observation may serve in its place. During recent years I have been studying the development of a peculiar type of political theory in Germany between the Peace of Augsburg and the death of Frederick the Great. Now I do not think that this strand of theory is the most important thing in German experience during that period, but I find that a great many less important things have been inflated into an appearance of consequence by the histories of that period, while I look in vain in those same histories for

allusions that even raise the question whether these theories were among the important formative factors of German civic life. It is a travesty of science which picks subjects for investigation according to the caprice of the investigator. Valid science would learn from the objective process encountered which factors have more meaning for the whole development actually taking place, and which factors have less meaning, and it would reconstruct the process so as to place as many factors as can be discovered in the relativity of their actual functions.

A seventh commonplace is immediately suggested by the sixth, namely, *it is a scientific desideratum that some method should be developed for determining a tentative order of values among the unknown factors about which inquiry is needed in the interest of social interpretation.*

In one of the preliminary announcements of the "scientific" congresses connected with the last Paris exposition, the only visible nexus between the congresses was a conspectus in the alphabetical order of their titles. They began with *Acetylene* and ended with *Zionism*. The projectors builded better than they knew in visualizing the anarchy of modern scientific investigation. In the last number of the *Economic Bulletin* I find this classification of the literature which the *Bulletin* is supposed to cover: (1) General Works, Theory and its History; (2) Economic History and Geography; (3) Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, and Fisheries; (4) Manufacturing Industries; (5) Transportation and Communication; (6) Trade, Commerce and Commercial Crises; (7) Accounting, Business Methods, Investments, and the Exchanges; (8) Capital and Capitalistic Organization; (9) Labor and Labor Organizations; (10) Money, Prices, Credit, and Banking; (11) Public Finance, Taxation, and Tariff; (12) Statistics of Population, Immigration, and Industry; (13) Insurance and Pensions; (14) Charities, Corrections, and Social Reforms; (15) Socialism and Co-operative Enterprises; (16) Municipal Questions; (17) Sociology; (18) Miscellaneous. Now I have no quarrel with the necessary evil of bibliographical classification. Let this scheme pass as good of its kind, for its own end of mechanical convenience. I am pointing out simply

that science itself must tend into equally mechanical grooves unless more vital correlations can be substituted for these clumsy assortings. Is there some common denominator, some meridian or equator, some solar ascension or lunar declination, by means of which to give these vagrants a place, an orbit, and a proportionality with reference to one another? If so, who knows about it, and what prospect is in sight that it will be used to make social investigation coherent? What relation, for example, have the researches under title 1 to those under title 17, and in what way does this relation in actual practice affect researches under the other titles? Is it, or is it not true, that investigation in these fields at present fails to correct its abstraction of problems by reconstructing them as factors of the whole social movement which gives them their value?

Commonplace number eight now ventures to testify, namely, *the more recurrent and the less transitory the relations investigated, the more universal and the less parochial the part they play, the greater their importance in explaining things as they are.*

Our scientific code has not yet sufficiently penalized inversion of this order. During my first semester at Berlin, in a course on the history of Greek philosophy, Professor Zeller devoted his lecture hour for three successive days to the question whether Socrates was born in the four hundred and seventieth or the four hundred and sixty-ninth or the four hundred and seventy-first year before Christ. I have yet to learn that it makes a particle of difference to Greek philosophy which date is correct; yet this sort of pedantry is still held before young scholars as exemplary, while the business man who made equally wasteful use of his capital would find it hard to fight an appeal to the courts for the appointment of a conservator. Whether or not Nero fiddled while Rome was burning, or Elizabeth deserved the title of "virgin queen," or Napoleon was less responsible than Grouchy for the fate of Waterloo, is the sort of question fit to furnish a story for the yellow journals. What is worth finding out is the meaning of Nero or Elizabeth or Napoleon each as an index of the effect of previous conjunctions of social forces, and as a cause of further rearrangements of social relations.

We now come to the point where certain of everybody's commonplaces appeal to some of us as worth special notice. Thus, without venturing to tender our friendly offices in presence of the perplexed philosophy in Bernheim's methodology of history; without presuming to propose a formula to reconcile the dilemma which seems to be growing more pathetic with the sequence of his editions, namely, the singular occurrence *versus* the collective movement as the Holy Grail of the historian; without daring to utter ourselves on that profoundly intelligent question of the ages whether history repeats itself; we may summon the ninth commonplace, that *similar groupings of people reappear from time to time, and from place to place*. These groupings exhibit recurrent forms and qualities of reciprocal influence between the individuals within them and groupings of other individuals outside of them. These groupings are evidently the deposit of certain antecedent conditions, and as evidently they become in turn factors in the creation of subsequent conditions. There is evidently a differentiation of species in these groupings, and corresponding diversification of functions in and between the groupings. What these groupings are, and what the phenomena of their permutations, is immaterial for our present purpose. Enough that for objective science nothing actual is insignificant. If these recurrent human groupings have not been made out to the limit of possible analysis, if their part in human experience has not been finally explained, whether they have ranked before as worthy of attention or not, whoever turns the searchlight upon these unobserved factors of the human reality is evidently doing something toward completing the function of the social sciences as interpreters of human experience.

It is impossible to word so much insight into the human reality without implying a tenth commonplace, namely, *these obtrusively recurrent groupings of persons are deposits, effects, machineries, causes of processes that are taking place between persons*. The groupings promote and stimulate and expand the purposes that gave them being, or they handicap and obstruct and choke those purposes. Thus government, school, church, each now enlarges, liberates, endows men's functions, and again each represses, con-

fines, and starves human powers. So of each law, each business custom, each social institution. It operates both as spur and as clog to human motions. Since such things as these recur in human experience, another generalization of demands upon science is unavoidable. We have the eleventh commonplace, that *there is the visible reality of social processes*. They play a part in human affairs. To find out all about these processes—what they do and why they do it—is a necessary stage in our inquiry into the meaning of human life. It follows again that if this phase of the human reality has been slurred over it must be brought up into the reckoning, and that meanwhile all conclusions about human relations must be regarded as premature until sufficient investigation of the social processes has been made to prove that we have not been mistaking appearance for reality in some parts of our interpretations.

Philosophers have debated time out of mind whether food makes man or man makes food; whether economic institutions make laborers or laborers make economic institutions; whether laws make citizens or citizens make laws. We have now gone far enough to see that life is not an affair of such simple alternatives. We see that life is not a succession in a straight line of causes and effects. On the contrary nothing is altogether cause, nothing is altogether effect, everything is in a state of perpetual reciprocation with everything else, now appearing more as acting, now more as acted upon, or probably at the same time in some of its manifestations more as molding and in others more as molded.

This insight gives our twelfth commonplace, namely, that *all the human processes are parts of a concurrent process*. This commonplace gave the philosophers of history their problem. With a common impulse they asked, "What is that whole of which we see details?" They speculated. They dogmatized. They assumed aprioris and theorized known facts into conformity with the assumptions. With Bossuet, for instance, the human whole was a superhuman whole—a divine plan progressively unfolding. With Schelling, the finite reality was an infinite reality—the self-evolution of the absolute. It is the fashion nowadays to sneer at the philosophers of history, but in following the fashion we are

sneering at one of the diameters of the expansion of the human mind. We either never reach that stage or we must pass through it to attain a larger diameter. The philosophers of history tried to give a final value to something which we may express as a thirteenth commonplace, namely, that *the human lot is an incessant intersection of processes*. Their formulas were unconvincing. We shall never end the matter by throwing up the attempt to find connections between the processes that make up experience. Connections are there. We are bound to follow out clues to them so long as anything within the range of experience remains unarticulated in our thought with the rest of experience.

Passing over the wide space that separates the viewpoint of the philosophers of history from our present outlook, I cite as the fourteenth commonplace—and the last which I will label as such—that *the whole process which the experience of man is filling out is the evolution of human values*.

I have not assembled these commonplaces as links in a syllogistic chain. I am not urging that the first commonplace necessarily gives forth the second, and the second the third, and so on to the logically indisputable conclusion, *therefore sociology*. On the contrary this is my point: When the plain people get it into their heads that there is something wrong about our American way of making a tariff, for instance, there is presently going to be a different way of making a tariff. It may not be an altogether better way. It may not be a final way, but a different way it will be; and its differences will correspond, for better or for worse, with the variations of the new way of thinking from the old way of thinking. Now we may generalize this concrete instance. When the old ways of thinking human experience in the large no longer satisfy our ways of looking at life as it is, the interpretations are bound to change. Our thought about life grows with life itself. New soundings in experience make new schedules to report the soundings.

Nor do I mean that these commonplaces are household words in the form in which I have expressed them. Not many people knowingly put them into words of any sort. Those who do word them do not word them alike. Few entirely agree upon the ratio

of significance for systematic theory which they attribute to the substance of a single one of them. I venture to say, however, that some rendering and arrangement of these commonplaces is in the mind of each member of all the associations that have been meeting together here this week. For this reason their thinking differs from the social theorizing of half a century ago as distinctly as the American type of popular political thinking differs from the German. Moreover the sort of thinking toward which these different commonplaces converge is the focus of sociology. Instead of being a meteorite shot from no one knows where into the social sciences, sociology was always latent in the logic of social interpretation. Wherever there is a flood there must be a fluid, and eventually a physics and chemistry of that fluid. Sociology is merely crystallizing elements that were already in the minds of all social scientists, and it is merely making higher-power lenses of the crystals for sharper scrutiny of experience.

I apply these propositions particularly to the last of the commonplaces which I have scheduled. What is a "human value"? In what sense is there an "evolution of human values"? Is there a standard of "human values"? Can the evolution of human values be measured? No two of us may be able precisely to agree upon answers. But whenever I hear able men trying to express the most fundamental things in their minds, I find that they are all stammering out some sort of statement that life must get its last rating from what it lodges in the make-up of people. For example, every speaker at Carnegie Hall last Monday evening sounded that note each in his own key. If I understand the sociological movement at all, this is the substance of its case. It refuses to believe, or to leave others undisturbed in acting as though they believed that there is no center of orientation from which to reckon the meaning of human experience. It refuses to believe that the human lot is a confusion of unrelated phenomena. It demands a final accounting of all our social sciences in terms of what is taking place not only around men, but in men, and finding its terminus in men. It maintains that this is not alone the only intelligible center of calculation for human experience but it is the only convincing measure of the relative value

of the different details of experience—an awfully inexact measure I admit, a measure that is as elastic as human judgment, still such as it is the most defensible measure that has ever been applied to human affairs, as a least common denominator of many incomparables. It is a measure not of the present force but of the essential worth of things, namely, *what part do they play in promoting the largest process we can discover, the realization of the attainable in persons?*

You may have noticed that I included sociology itself in my assertion that the social sciences tend on the one hand to become a decomposition of emphases. Now that I have stated what seems to me the central meaning of the sociological movement, I want to utter the warning which I had in mind in that form of statement. The sociological viewpoint has thrown the searchlight upon many passages of human experience which had been obscure and neglected before. It has already brought into being a generation of new sciences almost as independent of one another as the social sciences of the older type. I will not prophesy, I will simply utter a caution. *There is in these newer sociological sciences the same potentiality of sterile dissociation which was one of the fatalities of the older types.* Although these newer sciences are phases of the view of things which we obtain from the sociological outlook, the time may easily come when we shall have so far pursued the special investigations on which these new sciences have started that we shall have left our point of orientation out of sight. There will then be needed the same sort of recall to themselves, and of summons to orient themselves with reference to their real focus which the sociological factor in our present social sciences primarily represents. Even if it were vain to hope for specific results from the special sociological sciences, general sociology would still mark an epoch in the development of insight into human experience. The crucial element in sociology is not a particular discovery, but insistence upon the normative principle that not specialization but correlation shall always be the terminal stage in the scientific process.

The gist of the whole matter, as I see it, is this: *It would be a boon to interpretation of human experience if we could rise up*

in our might and destroy the whole miserable trumpery of mechanical partitions between social sciences, and leave ourselves in the stark presence of social problems. We should then no longer confuse issues by incessantly demanding of one another: Are you of psychology, or of history, or of economics, or of sociology? We should at least keep a little nearer to reality by inquiring: Have you a problem? What is it? How do you go about it? How do you connect it up with all the other problems that are closing in on the mystery of life?

We are not likely to adopt such heroic treatment, if for no other reason, because it would leave us without pedagogical line-fences. What is the alternative? I confess I used to have visions of sociologists functioning as a general staff, directing the movements of the social sciences. That now seems to me as undesirable as it is impossible. The desirable and the probable thing seems to me this: There will always be men of vision, whatever their special problems, who keep in mind the large outlook indicated by the sort of commonplaces I have recited. They will tend to function more and more as an unofficial board of strategy massing the different investigating processes upon converging results. Their moral influence will tend to transform the forces of social interpretation from unorganized raiders into an army of conquest. In other words, sociology cannot pass, any more than physical science or psychological science can pass. Each is now imbedded in the world's methods of thinking. Each may change its name. Each may go through innumerable trans-migrations of soul into the bodies of new problems; each may be refined in the course of these migrations; but each is an achieved power which, once gained, can never be lost.